challenges in the next century

New Englanders should be proud of their environmental protection achievements over the past 30 years. From Lubec to Lakeville, we have cleaner water, air, landscapes and neighborhoods. We're also seeing the economic benefits of these improvements - benefits such as flourishing tourism along the Blackstone and Connecticut Rivers and urban vitality in Bridgeport and Lowell, both cities where residents are flocking to minor league baseball stadiums built on former contaminated industrial parcels.

As EPA and our many local partners look to the future, we see plenty of challenges ahead. We are confronted with environmental issues that know no borders - interstate air pollution, regional growth challenges and, most daunting of all, the specter of global climate change. We're also confronted with local challenges like abandoned properties, polluted stormwater and lead-contaminated soils.

We can't predict what New England's environment will be like in 30 years, but we do know our progress will be based on many of the lessons we've learned so far. Among the most important lessons we've learned is the value of a strong commitment to public involvement and close collaboration with our partners. We've also learned the importance of sharing public information and making sure that information is useful for New Englanders trying to lead healthier lives - especially our children. Science and technology have opened huge doors to increase public knowledge, but we've only touched the tip of the iceberg.

With our experience and hard-won knowledge, we are confident that together we'll find new and successful ways of protecting our health and the environment in the next century.

Global Climate Change: Finding Solutions in New England

In 1987, widespread concerns about ozone-destroying CFCs prompted the first truly global response to a global environmental problem. Thirteen years later, we face another global air challenge - the prospect of worldwide climate change caused by the accumulation of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere.

While scientists do not know the exact causes of climate change, we do know that humans are contributing to the proliferation of greenhouse gases through the widespread burning of fossil fuels. Carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels is a chief component of greenhouse gases.

Three years ago, EPA New England launched an ambitious plan to increase public understanding of climate change and reduce actual greenhouse gas emissions across the region. Through such programs as Green Lights, EnergyStar Buildings and ClimateWise, we've greatly expanded voluntary energy efficiency and pollution prevention efforts around the region to curb greenhouse gas emissions. These voluntary programs have already resulted in a reduction of 1.3 million pounds of carbon dioxide emissions, the equivalent of taking 46,000 vehicles off the road. Participating companies also lowered their energy bills by more than $22 million annually.

EPA funding has enabled five New England states to complete greenhouse gas emission inventories and two of the states are moving forward with climate change mitigation plans—a step-by-step set of measures to reduce greenhouse emissions. EPA is also committed to educating New Englanders on this important issue. This spring, as part of Earth Day 2000, dozens of EPA staffers will be visiting our elementary schools to teach students about climate change and what they can do at school and at home to reduce the pollution that may be causing it.

If your family followed the tips below, you could cut CO_2 emissions by more than 11,000 lbs/year! You can get more information on what you can do at **www.epa.gov/globalwarming/actions/individual**

global warming tips: 10 ways you can help

	CO_2 reduction
❶ Plant two additional trees around your home...	20 Lbs/Year
❷ Use a push lawn mower instead of a power mower...	80 Lbs/Year
❸ Replace your home's refrigerator with a high-efficiency model...	220 Lbs/Year
❹ Buy food and other products with reusable or recyclable packaging instead of nonrecyclable packaging...	230 Lbs/Year
❺ Replace your current washing machine with a low-energy, low-water use machine...	440 Lbs/Year
❻ Install a solar hot water system to help provide your hot water...	720 Lbs/Year
❼ Recycle all of your home's waste newsprint, cardboard, glass, and metal (recycling plastic will further increase the reduction)	850 Lbs/Year
❽ Leave your car at home two days a week by carpooling, walking, biking or using public transportation to get to work...	1,590 Lbs/Year
❾ Insulate your home, tune up your furnace, and install energy-efficient shower heads...	2,480 Lbs/Year
❿ Purchase a fuel-efficient car (rated at 32 mpg or more) to replace your most frequently used automobile...	5,600 Lbs/Year

Protecting Communities from Sprawl

Among the region's most daunting challenges is rejuvenating our urban centers and reversing the spread of sprawl, which is devouring open space, clogging highways, worsening water pollution and eating away at the sense of community that helps define us as New Englanders.

EPA New England has taken a lead in tackling the sprawl issue. Our smart growth conference last year in Boston attracted more than 1,000 environmentalists, civic leaders, planners and developers from across the region. At the conference, we unveiled a $1.5 million action plan aimed at preserving open space, revitalizing urban areas, and empowering communities and local groups to better manage growth.

The program is off to a good start. Our Brownfields and Urban Environmental Initiative (UEI) programs are making our cities more livable and economically vibrant and we recently awarded our first round of Livable Community Grants—a package of seven grants totaling $226,000. We're also moving forward with a training program for community officials and with a federal agency partnership that will identify smart growth solutions in such areas as Hartford, the Woonasquatucket River and Boston's South Shore.

Protecting the health of our children is one of our top priorities.

Lastly, we continue to use our regulatory authority to fight poorly planned development projects. Last summer, we opposed a two-million-square-foot "super" retail mall in South Weymouth due to traffic and water shortage concerns. We also threatened to veto an ill-conceived highway in Conway, NH, an action that prompted the town to approve various environmental controls to protect wetlands and limit sprawl in the area. Creating truly livable communities for all of New England's residents will take a tremendous effort by all of us, but we have made a good start.

Children's Health

Protecting the environment and health of our children is one of our top priorities. Children are more vulnerable to environmental risks than most adults and we need to be mindful of this every time we apply our rules and regulations. Such was the case, for example, when we turned up the pressure on General Electric to move more quickly to clean up the PCB-contaminated Housatonic River. We will continue to expand innovative projects such as our award-winning lead testing and abatement programs, our healthy schools air quality programs, and our Manchester, NH Child Health Champion pilot project, an initiative to train local residents to help families change their home environments so they are safer for children. And, lastly, we'll rely on education and empowerment to protect our youngsters. As a kick-off to this commitment, we are planning a "Youth Summit" for Earth Day 2000, which will bring together 500 of the region's young environmental leaders from area high schools for a day of learning and training. All participants will be encouraged to sign a pledge card to protect the environment through their work.

Getting Quality Information to the Public

Citizens must be informed about environmental conditions that can impact their health - conditions such as high smog levels that increase respiratory problems, water bodies that are unsafe for swimming and lead-contaminated soils that compromise children's learning abilities. EPA New England will use any and all means to meet this challenge whether it's door-to-door pamphlet drops, neighborhood meetings or posting information on the World Wide Web. Strong science must also be the foundation for all of our work. We will continue to use high-quality science and the latest available technologies in measuring our environmental results and in rapidly reporting that information to local communities. Many of our most promising efforts in this regard have been through Environmental Monitoring for Public Access and Community Tracking (EMPACT), a new national program providing select New England cities

with "real-time" information about local water quality conditions, local air conditions and, in some cases, local soil conditions. Already we're using EMPACT to train Boston residents on using hand-held sensors to do on-the-spot lead soil sampling in residential backyards. We're also using EMPACT to keep swimmers, boaters and fishermen on Long Island Sound updated daily and hourly about changing water quality.

Partnerships for the Future

Perhaps the most important characteristic of the environmental protection work we do over the next 30 years will be the partnerships we create. Quite simply, EPA New England cannot do it alone. Much of our success so far is due to the dedication and effectiveness of the many New Englanders who have worked with us in finding smart and effective environmental solutions. In the years ahead, we will be building on these relationships to find other innovative ways for protecting our shared environment.

EPA New England owes a debt of gratitude to tribal governments, state and local agencies, and private businesses throughout the region who are raising the bar for environmental protection. We also are grateful to residents in all corners of New England who have joined us in the common goal of a healthy environment.

In the past 30 years, we have helped to bring about significant improvements in our environment. We are ready to face the challenges of the next century and find new ways of reaching our environmental goals. But only by working together will we succeed. The environment is not just in the hands of EPA New England. It is in the hands of all of us.

Tread Lightly: Getting Our Own House in Order

On Earth Day last year, EPA New England announced our Tread Lightly Project, an effort designed to address the environmental impacts of our office operations, with a special emphasis on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In order to set annual goals for our Boston office, we converted the environmental impacts of our activities (such as electricity and heating usage for our offices, solid waste produced by our offices, and employee travel) into units of carbon dioxide emissions, the principal greenhouse gas. Before the program began, EPA New England was producing 14,000 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions per person per year from heating, cooling and lighting our offices, paper consumption, travel and other activities. We set a goal of a 20% reduction by Earth Day 2002. During the first two quarters of last year, the project achieved an impressive reduction of nearly 1½ million pounds a year of CO_2 emissions, a 13% cut, due largely to a new office recycling program that resulted in a 23% increase in recycling.

Reducing Our Environmental Footprint